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RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0605
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0895
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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

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NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

1. Mideast
2. Global War on Terror

Key stories in the media:

All media reported on the return of the remains of the Israeli victims of Mumbai's terror attacks. The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday senior Foreign Ministry officials lashed out at the

Zaka rescue and recovery organization, charging that the group was causing considerable damage to Indo-Israeli ties by "meddling" in Mumbai. The officials were quoted as saying that public criticism of Indian commandos could have serious diplomatic repercussions.

All media reported that today the Labor Party will hold its primary under the shadow of polls predicting that it will lose as many as half its seats in the upcoming Knesset elections. The media report that the spots of Deputy DM Matan Vlinai, Education Minister Yuli Tamir, National Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, former DM Amir Peretz, and Knesset Finance Committee Chairman Prof. Avishay Braverman are uncertain.

HaQaretz quoted a senior Israeli diplomatic source as saying this week that President-elect Barack Obama is considering the appointment of Daniel Kurtzer, former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt and Israel, to become his administration's presidential envoy to the Middle East. HaQaretz said that President-elect Barack Obama's decision to appoint a special envoy reporting to him directly, rather than to the Secretary of State, indicates that the president-elect attaches special importance to the regional peace process. Reportedly, several of Obama's advisers recommended the appointment. According to the daily, the special envoy job could infringe on the prestige of Hillary Clinton, who was appointed secretary of state on Monday. On the other hand, it could ease any apparent conflict because of Bill Clinton's close ties with the Gulf States. The Jerusalem Post said that, in announcing Clinton's nomination, Obama named the Iranian threat and the effort to make peace between Israelis and Palestinians as two of the top three issues facing the incoming secretary of state. The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel's UN Ambassador Gabriela Shalev welcomed Obama's nomination of Susan Rice to be U.S. envoy to the UN.

Leading media reported that yesterday right-wing activists stepped up operations to resist an operation by security forces aimed at evicting them from the QHouse of Contentions in Hebron.

Major media reported that yesterday Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu threatened to withhold ministerial appointments from any party Knesset member who supports far-Right activist Moshe Feiglin attempts to gain a spot on Likud's Knesset list. "Placing Feiglin on Likud's Knesset list would harm Likud's strength. Feiglin is not Likud. He is extreme right," Netanyahu was quoted as saying.

Electronic media reported on a high security alert at the entrances to Tel Aviv this morning.

HaQaretz reported that PM Ehud Olmert's attorneys are weighing how to respond to Attorney General Menachem Mazuz's offer to hold a hearing for Olmert prior to charges being filed against him in the Rishon Tours double-billing affair. Leading media reported that Olmert refuses to heed Kadima's call to resign, saying that his decisions are professional.

Leading media reported that yesterday Fatah operative Muhammed Abu Driyah died of his wounds sustained while resisting arrest. The leading Internet news service Ynet quoted Palestinians as saying that he had been granted clemency by Israel as part of amnesty agreement, but Israel asserts he had returned to terrorism. Leading media reported that yesterday the Jerusalem District Court sentenced Ahmad Alna, one of the masterminds behind the assassination of minister Rehavam Zeevi, to life in prison.

The Jerusalem Post cited an internal Defense Ministry document, according to which unprecedented military coordination and a sincere effort by the PA to crack down on Hamas has led to a unique economic surge in the West Bank over the past year.

Visiting Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg was quoted as saying in an interview with HaQaretz yesterday: "I understand why Israel is saying that all the options [against Iran] are on the table, but I do think that any armed action or any war would be really a catastrophe." while on a 30-hour visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories. The Jerusalem Post reported that Netanyahu assured Schwarzenberg yesterday that he would continue diplomatic negotiations with the PA if he wins the elections in February and that those negotiations would take place alongside what he has called efforts to achieve economic peace.

Israel Radio reported that HaQaretz reporter Amira Hass was expelled from Gaza because she would not accept protection offered by the Hamas authorities. HaQaretz reported that she was detained by Israeli police last night for having entered Gaza without a permit.

The Jerusalem Post told the story of a Qready-made peace plan dropped in 1982 by President Reagan on the late PM Menachem Begin.

HaQaretz reported that yesterday a rabbi, a priest, and an imam met along the shores of the Lake of Galilee to pray for rain.

Yediot reported that on Friday Orly Avior, a female US citizen and resident of Netanya, will fly to Afghanistan for prolonged reserve duty in the U.S. Army.

I1. Mideast:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Herb Keinon wrote on page one of the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: QThat ObamaQs team represents continuity is, from IsraelQs vantage point, a strong positive.

Palestinian sociologist Mohammed Naim Farhat, who teaches at Bethlehem University, wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz: QFrom time to time we hear Israelis describe Palestinians as champions at missing opportunities. Someone should warn the Israelis so they do not become the champion of lost opportunities.

Block Quotes:

II. "Jerusalem Mostly Pleased with Obama Choices"

Diplomatic correspondent Herb Keinon wrote on page one of the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (12/2): QObamaQs campaign theme of change did not resonate well in Jerusalem, if only because Israel was happy with the status quo with Washington. That ObamaQs team represents continuity is, from IsraelQs vantage point, a strong positive. While Jerusalem did not always see eye-to-eye with [former Middle East security envoy and newly appointed national security advisor Gen. (ret.) James Jones] over the last year, particularly with regard to his apparent support for international forces, perhaps from NATO, in the West Bank, there was a sense that he definitely understood and was sympathetic to the countryQs security needs and concerns. Regarding Clinton, one senior diplomatic source said there was relief at her choice because it is always easier dealing with a known quantity, rather than an unknown one.

II. "What Israel HasnQt Tried"

Palestinian sociologist Mohammed Naim Farhat, who teaches at Bethlehem University, wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (12/2): QIsrael, strong on the one hand but anxious on the other, needs a new perspective to define the problems and means for solving them; a perspective based on humility and an understanding of the wise use of force. This new perspective must recognize the other and the rights of the other as a whole; to look for a real partner instead of dismissing that partner or trying to destroy, humiliate, change or determine the characteristics of that partner. As for the Palestinians, they must reevaluate their worldview, which has proven an utter failure in solving the conflict. The French literary critic Roland Barthes said that only things that seem obvious can be shocking. To this category belong the repeated failures of strong Israel. The Palestinians are also failing, in their own way. Violence is the only thing winning in this play, whose subject is the conflict between two peoples. And Israel is responsible for the violence. Anyone who does not see in an agreement a supreme interest from Israel's point of view, and a very essential interest from the Palestinian point of view, and does not work to bring it about, transforms the obvious into a deep historical swamp. From time to time we hear Israelis describe Palestinians as champions at missing opportunities. Someone should

warn the Israelis so they do not become the champion of lost opportunities.

12. Global War on Terror:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: QBy factoring in the Sunni-Shi'ite divide even when we think about Pakistan and Mumbai, we register a phenomenon that threatens destabilization from India to Egypt.

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized: QStrategic consensus and true international coordination are needed in this battle.

Block Quotes:

1I. "Thinking Beyond Mumbai"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (12/2): QWe know well that Muslim extremists are at war with other civilizations. We know too that there is a struggle between Islamists and moderates for the soul of Islam. What we often fail to remember, however, is yet another overlapping with Islam -- between the Sunni and Shi'ite worlds.... All of this highlights a fact that should become increasingly relevant to the foreign policy planning of the incoming Obama administration, as well as to the next Israeli government: The line between jihad within Islam and jihad against non-Muslims is becoming more and more blurred.... True, the Sunni-Shi'ite rivalry is but one layer in the exceptionally complex and at times indecipherable matrix of Islamic politics. It is also true that it can occasionally be overcome, as when Persian Shi'ite Iran supports Arab Sunni Hamas because both share a radical agenda. But ever since Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 revolution in Iran, Sunni establishments from Cairo to Baghdad to Amman, fearing a rising Shi'ite tide, got their backs up.... By factoring in the Sunni-Shi'ite divide even when we think about Pakistan and Mumbai, we register a phenomenon that threatens destabilization from India to Egypt.

II. "International Cooperation Needed to Stamp Out Terror"

The nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe editorialized (12/2): QIt doesn't matter whether [terrorist] operations are conducted by the Mujahedeen of southern India or Lashkar a-Taybeh or Al-Qaida together with Pakistani intelligence.... This is a technical matter. The ideology is the same ideology that is behind terror in Israel and in the PA, in London, Manhattan, and Madrid, in Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. The democratic world must start calling things by their name.... Above all, strategic consensus and true international coordination are needed in this battle, so that we no longer hear on the Israeli radios the spokesmen of Hamas and other spokesmen saying through the Israeli announcer that we have lost the war against terror.

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